

# Medicine Bow Landscape Vegetation Analysis (LaVA)

Cooperating Agencies Meeting - Telephone

August 15, 2018; 0930 – 1100

Call-in Number: 1-888-844-9904; Passcode: 6838442

## In Attendance:

Jason Armbruster, Justin Williams, Mark Conrad, State Forestry, Brian Hall, Leanne Correll, Tony Hoch, Theresa Nallick, Lily Zahor, Beth Calloway, Katie Cheesbrough, and Casey Campbell

**Next Cooperating Agency Meeting:** Wednesday, September 19, 2018 – **Face-to-face**

**Open House After Action** – what have you heard that could improve the FEIS?

**Participating CAs:** Laramie – Katie Cheesbrough; Travis Pardue; Martin Curry Cheyenne: Dena Egenhoff; Justin Williams; Mark Conrad Saratoga: Leanne Correll; Katie Cheesbrough

**What the FS heard:** Public concerns remain around the scope and scale of the project; lack of site-specificity; temporary roads; and roadless areas. People are still having difficulty understanding the TOAs and seem to associate the brown, mechanical TOA as a broad-scale timber harvest.

**Cooperator Feedback: General** - Most public attendees had actively participated since scoping and maintain similar comments/concerns about the project now as they did in the beginning. There was opposition from Duane and Joy Keown at the Laramie and Cheyenne meetings. **Specific:** the FS needs to keep landowners in the loop when it comes time for project implementation. The FS needs to provide more clarity around project implementation and what that is expected to look like (Story Map should help).

**DEIS Check-in** – are you aware of any immediate, glaring errors that we could work on resolving now?

**Forest Service:** Currently working to improve maps, photos, and graphics for FEIS; incorporating new TOA map depicting 'no temporary road' layer into Chapter 2.

## Cooperator Feedback:

- **ECA:** The FS needs to finalize the path forward, as related to ECA. The June meeting was a good start, but further discussions are needed. Several CAs are interested in participating in future discussions. **Consider including ECA as a topic on the September CA meeting agenda.**
- **Lynx:** Clarification around the biological determination is needed. Some CAs question the 'adversely impact' determination and believe that project implementation should improve lynx habitat, not worsen it. **Red Flag Review Item**
- **Wildfire:** The No Action Alternative is hit or miss regarding discussions of wildfire, making the analysis appear lopsided and inconsistent.
- **Tone:** Specialist information does not seem objective – you can tell, section by section, who's in favor of the project v. who's not. Extra care needs to be taken to present facts and not opinions, not just in the EIS but when conversing about the project as well. **Red Flag Review item**
- **Cumulative Effects:** Information varies between sections and is not formatted the same. Several sections indicate that there are no cumulative effects associated with the No Action alternative because nothing is proposed. That is not the case, though, because current

management would continue. This needs to be emphasized in the FEIS. What would things start to look like, absent the Modified Proposed Action? That is a story that has yet to be told.

***Maybe include the continuation of current management as an assumption at the beginning of Chapter 3.*** Cumulative effects analyses are lacking overall (e.g., some sections talk about on-going timber harvest and other management actions while others don't). **Red Flag Review Item.**

- **Temporary Roads:** It is not clear throughout the document that we are talking about temporary roads. Several sections speak to 'roads' in general, which is confusing and misleading. We emphasize this fact verbally, but that message did not get carried over into the DEIS. Pay particular attention to **hydrology** – the DEIS leads one to believe that all 600 miles of temporary road would be in wetlands.
- **Inventoried Roadless Areas:** The document is misleading in that it is relatively silent about skidding and landings in IRAs. This leads the public to believe that actions would be less obtrusive than they likely would be. This needs to be clarified in the FEIS, ***and maybe added to the 'assumptions' at the beginning of Chapter 3.***
- **Implementation:** There has been a lot of turnover, just in the amount of time we've been working on the project. The FEIS needs to address how the project would be implemented, absent original players, to provide assurances to affected/interested parties. ***Potential September agenda item.***
- **Badger Creek/Beaver Creek fires:** How will these fires be addressed in the FEIS? **Response:** At a minimum, they should be addressed as part of cumulative effects (past, present, reasonably foreseeable actions). The FS is currently using the Badger Creek fire as a 'pilot' to determine effectiveness of the Implementation Framework. This information should be included on p. 94 under the fire history discussion. A discussion about increased fire intensity would be a good point to make.

### **Cooperating Agency meetings – scheduling and frequency.**

**Forest Service:** We have heard that it may be time to relook at our schedule and move to an every other month schedule, given when we are in the process. Thoughts?

### **Cooperating Agencies:**

- **General Consensus:** Monthly meetings are necessary until the FEIS and Draft ROD are released.
- **Venue:** Consider every other month for a face-to-face v. a phone call.
- **Specialist Participation:** More FS IDT members need to participate in the monthly CA meetings. These people are needed to answer questions in the moment and to stay more engaged in the process.
- **Future Outreach meetings:** What is the plan? **Response:** From a NEPA standpoint, we don't have any more meetings planned. However, we have been making presentations as people have made requests. We are routing requests through Aaron Voos. We are open to, and welcome, any suggestions regarding how to continue to inform and disclose.

**Meeting adjourned.**